

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings of claims in the instant application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for enabling access of a plurality of databases by a single access operation wherein each database in said plurality of databases requires a separate driver to access the database so that there is a plurality of separate drivers, said method comprising:

using an application programming interface (API) for each driver in said plurality of separate drivers, wherein said API is substantially identical for each of said drivers in said plurality of separate drivers;

receiving said single access operation by a merging driver wherein in response to said single access operation, said merging driver accesses each driver in said plurality of separate drivers through said API;

accessing an associated database in said plurality of databases by said each driver in response to said merging driver access through said API,

wherein said single access operation enabled access of said plurality of databases; and

said single access operation is performed for each of said plurality of databases to search for stored data related to said single access operation in each of said plurality of databases;

receiving a result offer from each of said plurality of databases having data available that is responsive to said single access operation; and

obtaining, by said merging driver automatically without user action, an ordered result in response to said single access operation wherein said obtaining further comprises retrieving results, by said merging driver, corresponding to said result offers from said plurality of databases in an order to obtain said ordered result.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 further comprising:

receiving from a user a selection of each database to be included in said plurality of databases.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 2 wherein one database in said plurality of databases is a merging data source.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 further comprising:

accessing said merging driver through a user interface API.

6. (Currently Amended) A computer program product comprising a tangible computer readable medium having stored therein computer program code for enabling access of a plurality of databases by a single access operation wherein each database in said plurality of databases requires a separate driver to access the database so that there is a plurality of separate drivers, said method comprising:

using an application programming interface (API) for each driver in said plurality of separate drivers, wherein said API is substantially identical for each of said drivers in said plurality of separate drivers;

receiving said single access by a merging driver wherein in response to said single access operation, said merging driver accesses said plurality of separate drivers through said API; and

accessing an associated database in said plurality of databases by said each driver in response to said merging driver access through said API,

wherein said single access operation enabled access of said plurality of databases;

said single access operation is performed for each of said plurality of databases to search for stored data related to said single access operation in each of said plurality of databases;

receiving a result offer from each of said plurality of databases having data available that is responsive to said single access operation; and

obtaining, by said merging driver automatically without user action, an ordered result in response to said single access operation wherein said obtaining further comprises retrieving results, by said merging driver, corresponding to said result offers from said plurality of databases in an order to obtain said ordered result.

7. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of Claim 6 wherein said method further comprises:

receiving from a user a selection of each database to be included in said plurality of databases.

8. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of Claim 7 wherein one database in said plurality of databases is a merging data source.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of Claim 6 wherein said method further comprises:

accessing said merging driver through a user interface API.

11. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

a plurality of databases;

a driver for each database in said plurality of databases thereby forming a plurality of drivers wherein

each driver has a substantially identical driver application programming interface; and

a merging driver coupled to each driver in said plurality of drivers through said driver application programming interface

wherein said merging driver distributes a single query to each driver in said plurality of drivers so that said single query is directed to each of said plurality of databases to search for stored data related to said single query in each of said plurality of databases;

said merging driver receives a result offer from each of said plurality of databases having data available that is responsive to said single access operation; and

said merging driver generates, automatically without user action, an ordered result comprising retrieving results corresponding to said result offers from said plurality of databases in an order to generate said ordered result.

12. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 11 wherein one database in said plurality of databases is a merging data source.

13. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

a processor; and

a memory coupled to said processor, and having stored therein computer program instructions, wherein execution of computer program instructions by said processor comprises a method for enabling access of a plurality of databases by a single access operation wherein each database in said plurality of databases requires a separate driver to access the database so that there is a plurality of separate drivers, said method comprising:

using an application programming interface (API) for each driver in said plurality of separate drivers, wherein said API is substantially identical for each of said drivers in said plurality of separate drivers;

receiving said single access operation by a merging driver wherein in response to said single access operation, said merging driver accesses each driver in said plurality of separate drivers through said API;

accessing an associated database in said plurality of databases by said each driver in response to said merging driver access through said API,

wherein said single access operation enabled access of said plurality of databases; and

said single access operation is performed for each of said plurality of databases to search for stored data related to said single access operation in each of said plurality of databases;

receiving a result offer from each of said plurality of databases having data available that is responsive to said single access operation; and

obtaining, by said merging driver automatically without user action, an ordered result in response to said single access operation wherein said obtaining further comprises retrieving results, by said merging driver, corresponding to said result offers from said plurality of databases in an order to obtain said ordered result.

14. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 13, said method further comprising:

receiving from a user a selection of each database to be included in said plurality of databases.

15. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 14 wherein one database in said plurality of databases is a merging data source.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 13, said method further comprising:

accessing said merging driver through a user interface API.